CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A computer program for use in a computer having an operating system, the

2   computer program comprising code for:

3   determining a plurality of application programs that are to be launched by the

4   operating system;

5   determining a program launch procedure associated with the application

6   programs, the program launch procedure defining a sequence in which the application

7   programs are to be launched by the operating system, the sequence based on the

8   functionality of at least one of the application programs; and

9   launching the application programs with the operating system based on the

10 program launch procedure.

1   2.   The computer program of claim 1, wherein launching the application programs

2   based on the program launch procedure comprises:

3   launching one of the application programs;

4   after a predetermined length of time, launching another of the application

5   programs.

1   3.   The computer program of claim 1, wherein launching the application programs

2   based on the program launch procedure comprises:

3   launching one of the application programs;

4   in response to a predetermined contingency, launching another of the

5   application programs.

1   4.   The computer program of claim 1, wherein the program launch procedure is

2   specified by a user via a user interface device.

1   5.   The computer program of claim 1, wherein determining a program launch

2   procedure associated with the application programs comprises accessing a data file

3   stored in a memory.

1   6.   The computer program of claim 1, wherein the program launch procedure

2   further defines an operating system restriction for at least one of the application

3   programs.

1   7.   The computer program of claim 1, wherein the launching the application

2   programs with the operating system is initiated by the operating system.

1   8.   A method for controlling the manner in which application programs are

2   launched on a computer, the computer comprising a processor adapted to control the

3   operation of the computer and memory comprising an operating system that includes a

4   system initialization program adapted to store a list of programs to be launched by the

5   operating system, the method comprising the steps of:

6   storing a reference to a program launch management module in the system

7   initialization program, the program launch management module configured to:

8   determine application programs that are to be launched by the

9   operating system;

10   determine a program launch procedure associated with the application

11   programs, the program launch procedure defining a sequence in which the

12   application programs are to be launched, the sequence based on the

13   functionality of at least one of the application programs; and

14   launch the application programs based on the program launch

15   procedure; and

16   accessing the system initialization program and executing the program launch

17   management module.

1   9.   The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of installing the application

2   programs on the computer before the step of storing a reference to a program launch

3   management module in the system initialization program.

1   10.   The method of claim 8, wherein launching the application programs based on

2   the program launch procedure comprises:

3   launching one of the application programs;

4   after a predetermined length of time, launching another of the application

5   programs.

1   11.   The method of claim 8, wherein launching the application programs based on

2   the program launch procedure comprises:

3   launching one of the application programs;

4   in response to a predetermined contingency, launching another of the

5   application programs.

1   12.   The method of claim 8, wherein the program launch procedure is specified by

2   a user via a user interface device.

1   13.   The method of claim 8, wherein determining a program launch procedure

2   associated with the application programs comprises accessing a data file stored in a

3   memory.

1   14.   The method of claim 8, wherein the program launch procedure further defines

2   an operating system restriction for at least one of the application programs.

1   15.   The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of initializing the operating

2   system after the step of storing a reference to a program launch management module

3   in the system initialization program.

1 16. The method of claim 8, wherein the operating system is Windows-based.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the system initialization program comprises

2 a RunOnce key in a system registry associated with the operating system.

1 18. A method for controlling the launching of application programs by an

2 operating system, the method comprising the steps of:

3 determining application programs that are to be launched by the operating

4 system;

5 determining a program launch procedure associated with the application

6 programs, the program launch procedure defining a sequence in which the application

7 programs are to be launched by the operating system, the sequence based on the

8 functionality of at least one of the application programs; and

9 launching the plurality of application programs based on the program launch

10 procedure.

1 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of launching the application

2 programs based on the program launch procedure comprises the steps of:

3 launching one of the application programs;

4 after a predetermined length of time, launching another of the application

5 programs.

1   20.   The method of claim 18, wherein the step of launching the application

2   programs based on the program launch procedure further comprises the steps of:

3   launching one of the application programs;

4   in response to a predetermined contingency, launching another of the

5   application programs.

1   21.   The method of claim 18, wherein the program launch procedure is specified by

2   a user via a user interface device.

1   22.   The method of claim 18, wherein the step of determining a program launch

2   procedure associated with the application programs further comprises the step of

3   accessing a data file stored in a memory.

1   23.   The method of claim 18, wherein the program launch procedure further

2   defines an operating system restriction for at least one of the application programs.

1   24.   The method of claim 18, wherein the step of launching the application

2   programs with the operating system is initiated by the operating system.